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Office of the Dean
School of Medicine
SOM-DPM-002-04
Date: September 14, 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR FACULTY, STAFF, AND MEDICAL STUDENTS

SUBJECT: Fourth-Year Student Electives and Subinternships

A. Reissuance and Purpose. This memorandum reissues SOM Dean's Policy Memorandum SOM-DPM-001-03, "Fourth Year Student Electives and Subinternships," dated October 21, 2003 (hereby canceled) and establishes policies and procedures regarding approval and selection of fourth year student electives and subinternships.

B. Definitions.

1. Fourth-Year Electives are four-week educational offerings for senior medical students. The overall goal of these electives is to provide students with opportunities that will further strengthen and integrate their skills and knowledge in clinical care, medical illness and disease knowledge and health care. While these electives are predominantly clinical, occurring in the ambulatory (clinic) or inpatient (ward) settings, they may also be operational or research oriented. Fourth-year electives will have specific goals and objectives that complement and expand student experiences beyond those in the third-year curriculum. Travel and lodging/subsistence expenses associated with fourth-year electives outside the National Capital Region are ordinarily a student responsibility.

2. Subinternships are designed to provide students with the background and experience to function at the "intern" level, and to continue to excel throughout the PGY-1 year. The subinternship must emphasize progressive responsibility for patient care, including overnight call, independent thinking and team functioning as skills essential to success during internship. Students must complete: 1) a four-week subinternship level clerkship in an inpatient non-surgical field (Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Neurology, Pediatrics, Psychiatry); and 2) a four-week subinternship level clerkship in an inpatient surgical experience (General Surgery, surgical specialties, Obstetrics and Gynecology). Students with marginal performance in their third-year may be required by academic departments to complete an appropriate period of remediation involving their fourth-year; some of this remediation may require subinternships that are longer than four weeks. Remediating students are still required to complete both surgical and non-surgical subinternships.

C. Policy.

1. Each elective must be sponsored by a USU academic department. Departments have the latitude to be innovative in the types of experiences offered to senior students. The total number of training positions offered needs to be limited so that each site is assured of a continuous flow of students, thus encouraging faculty interest and involvement with the program.

A USUHS authorized representative should be on-site to monitor the curriculum and enhance continuity.

2. Clear written goals and objectives for each fourth-year elective and subinternship must be available for students. Rigorous and consistent standards for evaluation of electives and subinternships must be developed and maintained by each academic department. Each department must also develop and maintain an evaluation tool to assess student subinternship performance to ensure consistency with contemporary undergraduate educational goals and postgraduate training expectations. Similarly, procedures for rigorous and consistent evaluation of student performance must be used for all fourth-year electives. Annually, the department should evaluate its success in meeting stated goals and objectives.

3. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) or Understanding (MOU) must be signed for each fourth-year elective and kept on file in the office of the USU Agreements Manager, unless the elective is covered by an existing major affiliation agreement between USU and the medical treatment facility hosting the elective. This is necessary both for legal reasons, and to ensure compliance with LCME requirements.

4. The Executive Committee on Curriculum will ensure that departmental fourth-year elective approval processes and, ultimately, all fourth-year subinternships and senior year electives are in compliance with SOM goals and objectives.

D. Procedures and responsibilities:

1. Students.

a. Students must familiarize themselves with elective rotations' goals and objectives available on the registrar's MS4 website, and must obtain approval for each proposed MS4 elective from the appropriate academic department and from the Office of Student Affairs (OSA).

b. Students will coordinate scheduling of each elective with the Registrar's office and, if/as appropriate, with the USU Agreements Manager.

c. Students contemplating international electives should additionally consult with OSA, the SOM Commandant and, if/as appropriate, with the USU Agreements Manager, and the Director, Student Health Clinic (Chair, Family Medicine). Students must obtain country clearance through the Administrative Services Office, in conjunction with their TDY orders.

d. All student schedules must be approved by the OSA.

2. Department Chair.

Each Department Chair will ensure that all electives offered through the Department are in compliance with the policies outlined above. Information on new fourth year

electives that have been approved by the department will be submitted to the Office of the Assistant Dean for Admissions and Academic Records (ADM) through the Office of Student Affairs.

3. Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs (ADA)

a. The Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs provides broad oversight over all SOM clinical affiliations, to include those established for fourth-year required and elective clerkships and subinternships. Any affiliation agreement issues that cannot be resolved by the Agreements Manager should be addressed to the ADA.

b. The Office of Clinical Affairs ensures that international educational and research initiatives are coordinated with and/or approved by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs (OASD (HA)), as appropriate. Although no approval is normally needed from OASD (HA) for international fourth-year electives, students contemplating such electives should discuss their plans with the ADA or the Clinical Affairs Program Manager, to ensure that these plans are realistic, realizable and safe, and that they do not require special approval.

4. Associate Dean for Student Affairs (ADSA)/Assistant Dean for Clinical Sciences (ADCS)

a. Annually the ADSA/ADCS will review the results of departmental systematic review of existing fourth-year electives and subinternships.

b. The ADSA and the ADCS will review the individual fourth-year academic schedules of all fourth-year students to ensure that they reflect an appropriate balance of subinternship and senior-year electives.

5. Assistant Dean for Admissions and Academic Records (ADAAR)

The ADAAR will maintain a Web listing of all electives and subinternships offered to MS4 students. The ADAAR will ensure that list updates are cleared with the Agreements Manager to ascertain that an MOA/MOU is in place for each elective.

6. The Director, USU Health Clinic (Chair, Family Medicine)

The Director, USU Health Clinic (Chair, Family Medicine) ensures that students contemplating international electives have all required inoculations and, for remote destinations, additional instructions/medical supplies as appropriate.

7. Agreements Manager.

The Agreements Manager will assist departments in establishing an MOA/MOU with each institution hosting a USU student elective/subinternship. He will also review updated lists of electives provided by the ADAAR to ensure that all electives included in the list are supported by an MOA/MOU.

7. Executive Committee on Curriculum.

The Executive Committee on Curriculum will review each department's elective approval process on an ongoing basis, and may periodically review all subinternships and senior-year electives to ensure compliance with SOM goals and objectives.


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